

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: It is a pleasure to be here today and provide you with an overview of government and intergovernmental efforts to combat human trafficking. I would like to acknowledge this panel for its leadership in making human trafficking, or modern-day slavery, a high priority.

As our sixth annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* demonstrates, this effort is achieving results from the work of a growing community of nations. This past year, we've seen a greater global effort to combat human trafficking by punishing traffickers, protecting victims and preventing future acts of slavery. Thanks to your pro-active efforts and advocacy for anti-trafficking measures, modern-day slavery is receiving the world-wide attention it deserves.

The goal of the *TIP Report* is to stimulate action and create partnerships around the world in the fight against modern-day slavery. Countries determined to have a significant number of trafficking victims are evaluated in the report and are assigned to one of three tiers. This year 158 nations from around the world were evaluated.

Countries assessed as meeting the "minimum standards for the elimination of severe forms of trafficking" set forth in the law are classified as "Tier 1."

Countries assessed as not fully complying with the minimum standards, but making significant efforts to meet those minimum standards, are classified as "Tier 2."

Countries assessed as neither complying with the minimum standards nor making significant efforts to do so are classified as "Tier 3."

Countries classified as "Tier 2 Watch List" are at risk of slipping to Tier 3 unless serious concerns are addressed.

In June, the Secretary of state placed 12 countries in Tier 3, as those governments did not fully comply with the act's minimum standards and were not making significant efforts to do so. Those countries were: Belize, Burma, Cuba, Iran, Laos, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.

The U.S. works closely with cooperative Tier 2 Watch List and Tier 3 governments that are not fully complying with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, helping them make significant efforts to do so.

In the weeks following release of the *TIP Report*, we produce Action Plans that help governments provide approaches in prosecuting, drafting laws and victim rehabilitation, and funding anti-trafficking programs tailored to those approaches.

After receiving the plans, Tier 3 countries have 90 days to come into compliance in order to justify a reassessment by the Secretary of State to Tier 2 Watch List.

The Congressional mandate for the report, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), as amended, requires the President to make sanctions determinations regarding each country remaining in Tier 3, after the Secretary's reassessment.

In addition to my role as director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the State Department, I serve as chairman of the Senior Policy Operating Group, which implements the policies set forth by

the President's Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons chaired by Secretary Rice. Each of the government agencies involved in anti-TIP efforts meets quarterly to guide actions to end modern-day slavery. This is good for government-wide policy and program coordination, and for maximizing our success against human trafficking here and abroad.

This morning, I want to commend Ricky Martin's efforts against modern-day slavery. He has been a true friend to the abolition of slavery and of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, donating his time and money to keep the vulnerable in a number of countries from falling prey to the deceptive tricks of the slave traders.

I also commend Dr. Horn and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), certifying foreign trafficking victims so they may qualify for the same assistance available to refugees. HHS is also running a major public awareness campaign in the U.S.

There is no simple approach to combat trafficking. We need to combine efforts — across states, across countries, and across regions — to ensure that this inhuman activity is not allowed to exist in any part of the world. As

Secretary Rice said earlier this month, “protecting the non-negotiable demands of human dignity is the equal calling of every country... including the United States.”